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ABSTRACT

The current shortcomings of preservice teacher education in the area of international education are addressed in this paper. It is emphasized that prospective teachers must develop a perspective consciousness, a sense of global dynamics, awareness of emergent human goals, and an awareness of ethical problems in a global context. A discussion is offered on the dynamics of relationships between national societies and the international society. A consideration of the future of teacher education explores ways in which to develop a curriculum that replaces a society-centric approach to the social sciences with one in which a world system perspective will be taught. (JD)

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The Social Sciences and the International Education of Prospective Teachers

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The Social Sciences and the International Education of Prospective Teachers

The Present

I begin with a few simplicities. First, a couple of simple but important definitions. By international education, I mean, "the process by which people acquire a global perspective."(1) Also following AACTE guidelines, I define a global perspective as consisting of: a perspective consciousness, a state of the planet awareness, a cross-cultural awareness, a sense of global dynamics, awareness of emergent human goals, and an awareness of ethical problems in global context.(2)

Now, two simple facts. In any given academic year, several hundred thousand social science courses are taught in American colleges and universities. In the same given academic year, several thousand American undergraduates tell themselves, their parents, and university officials they want to be school teachers when they grow up.

Next, a simple question followed by an answer almost as simple as the question. The question: Do the several thousand undergraduate social science courses significantly contribute to the international education of the several thousand American undergraduates who plan to be teachers? This is to say, do these courses significantly enhance the development of a global perspective on the part of prospective teachers?

The answer: No, on the whole they probably do not. A simple "no" is compromised by "probably" because anything resembling adequate documentation of the claim does not exist.(3) Also, I moderate my otherwise bleak assertion with "on

the whole" because exceptions to the generalizations do exist. Some social science courses do enhance the global perspective of the prospective teachers. For now these exceptions are unimportant; but I will return to them later when they do become important.

Assuming my assertion does not mutilate reality beyond recognition, then we are lead to another question but one not so easily answered. Why do the millions of person-hours expended by social scientists in thousands of undergraduate classrooms have so little impact on the international education of the nation's future teachers? On the surface this seems anomalous. After all, modern social science developed in the 19th and 20th centuries as efforts to map the recently discovered cultural diversity characteristic of the human species; to chart the global dynamics that were radically transforming social life; to account for differences between the modern state of the planet and the human condition in pre-modern times; to explain individual variability in perceptions of the social world--all matters at the very heart of international education. Hence, one might reasonably expect social science education to significantly contribute to growth of a global perspective on the part of prospective teachers. The potential seems there, but the promise seems unfulfilled. Why the gap between potentiality and actuality?

There are two alternative (but not competitive) explanations of this disparity. One locates the sources of the problem in the sociology of teacher education; the other in the intellectual architecture of modern social science.

Viewing the problem from the first perspective, we see two reasons why the social sciences play so minor a role in the international education of prospective teachers. One, there are large sub-populations of prospective teachers who are exposed to next to no social science in the course of their college life, e.g., many prospective elementary school teachers, education majors seeking certification in math and science, etc. Obviously, courses not taken cannot develop a student's global perspective.

Two, there is a bias in the kinds of social science courses taken by prospective teachers, including those future teachers enrolling in a relatively large number of social science classes, e.g., secondary school social studies majors. Imagine we can easily classify social science classes into two categories: 1) courses whose content and focus center on the United States, e.g., classes in American history, in American politics and government, in American social problems, etc., and 2) courses whose content and focus center on the rest of the world and/or the United States' relationship to it, e.g., classes in international politics and foreign policy, in international economics, in comparative economics, in African studies, in Asian history, in comparative politics, etc.

Now, imagine we counted the number of courses in each of the two categories taken by prospective teachers. I have no doubt about what we would find. Most of the courses would fall in the first category; that is, they would be courses centered on American society.

Moreover, were we to refine our analysis by differentiating "international studies" courses into Europe-centered classes and courses focused geographically on the non-western world or classes focused conceptually on the world as a whole (e.g., a class in global history, a class in international political economy), I also have no doubt about what we would discover. Of the "international studies" courses taken by prospective teachers, the majority would be Euro-centric, i.e., courses in European history, in comparative European politics, etc.

If this exercise in "let's pretend" research is valid, then it is not surprising that social science courses contribute little to the growth of a global perspective on the part of prospective teachers. Across the board, we would expect "international studies" courses to contribute more to a student's international education than "American studies" classes. But most courses taken by most prospective teachers are not "international studies." Moreover, within "international studies" classes we would expect "Euro-centric courses" to contribute less to a global perspective than either classes in which students encounter the human experience in the non-western world or classes in which they study about the world as a whole. But most of the international studies courses taken by most prospective teachers are "Euro-centric."

The explanation I have just outlined speaks truth.(4) Indeed, the element of truth is big enough to lead many social scientists to conclude that the "sociology of teacher education" explanation of the problem is the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Once one arrives at this conclusion, analysis can stop. The problem is simple and so is the solution. The problem: The international education of prospective teachers is bad because they take too few of the right kind of social science courses. The solution: One, increase the number of social science courses required of all prospective teachers. Two, expand the representation of "international studies" classes in this set of required courses. Simple problem, simple solutions, or so it seems to many social scientists who need not dirty their hands in the mundane matters of overcrowded curriculums, of state mandated requirements, of the expectations of school officials who hire new teachers and so on.

But the matter is not so simple, even if we ignore the organizational difficulties of following intellectually abstract admonitions. It is not so simple because defects in the sociology of teacher education are only one source of the problem. Indeed, I believe they are a comparatively minor source.

The basic fact is this. A very large number of social science courses (including many "international studies" classes) are not good places for any student to get a good international education regardless of whether he or she is a future teacher, a future lawyer, a future accountant, or what have you.(5) To put the matter bluntly, much of social science education is bad international education because at best it fails to develop students' global perspective, and at worst it inhibits this development.

To discover why this is the case we must look at the intellectual architecture of modern social science. At least

four features of this architecture work against international education; that is, they inhibit the development of a global perspective on the part of both social scientists and the students we teach. Because of space limitations, I will merely note three of these so I can treat the fourth more extensively.

First, there is the fact that social science is fragmented into seven major quasi-separate disciplines: political science, history, sociology, economics, geography, anthropology, and social psychology. Social reality, of course, does not mirror these divisions at all. For example, there is no anthropology of world hunger removed from an economics of world hunger, nor an economics of world hunger separate from a political science of world hunger and so on. International education at its best treats social facts wholistically. But the division of social science into separate and often isolated disciplines makes the doing of this difficult.

Second, there is the de facto separation of history from the other social sciences. Every social fact has an autobigrphy that helps explain why it is what it is. Hence, no social fact can be adequately comprehended in the absence of historical analysis. Yet, many of us in political science, economics, etc., try to do the impossible much of the time, and with adverse consequences for the international education of our students. For instance, we teach about underdevelopment in the Third World as if underdevelopment had no history in European imperialism.

Third, there is the legacy of positivism with its fact/value dichotomy. Normative (value-oriented) analysis is separated from empirical (fact-oriented) analysis. The former

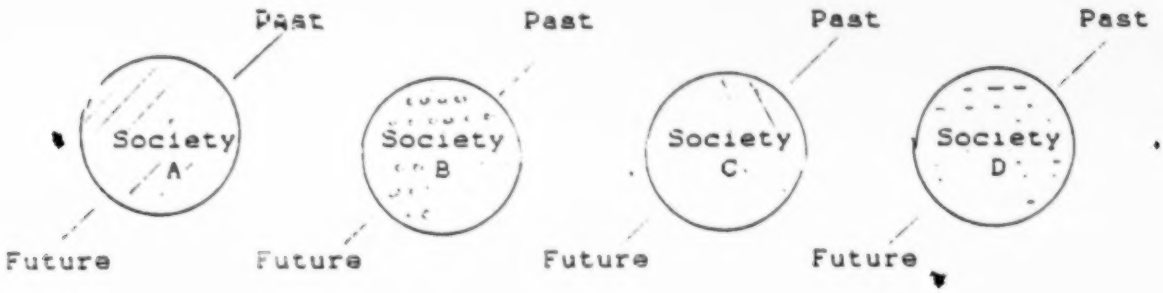
is assigned to philosophy departments or relegated to a periphery of social science where live such "marginal people" as students of political philosophy and social ethics. The effects of this on the international education of students are familiar sights on any college campus: a small set of "ethically active" students lacking empirically disciplined comprehension of how the world works; a large number of "sophisticated" students with no inclination or capacity to engage in disciplined normative analysis of world hunger, nuclear war, deprivations of human rights, etc; and sadly, a very small set of students who combine a disciplined empirical knowledge of the state of the planet with well-developed skills in moral reasoning and ethical analysis.

Fourth, there is the dominance of the society-centric image of the world's social structure. This is a subtle and somewhat abstract matter, but perhaps also the most important one in understanding why social scientists are often poor international educators. Hence, I will dwell at greater length on this particular feature of the intellectual architecture of modern social science.

Just as the work-a-day world of astronomers is grounded in a paradigmatic image of the cosmos, so the work-a-day world of social scientists is grounded in and shaped by a paradigmatic image of the subject matter of social science; namely, the social structure of the world. The paradigmatic image of the world's social structure traditionally dominating most of modern social science can be called a "society-centric perspective."

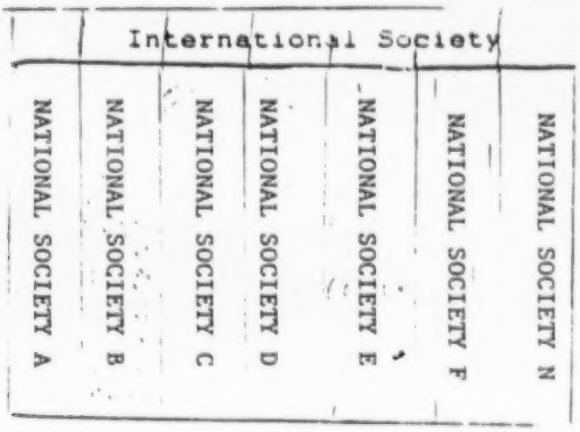
This perspective is janus-faced much like the classical drawing in psychology books that appears sometimes to be an old

woman and at other times to be a young Lady. Viewed from one angle, the world's social structure looks like this.



We first see that the largest and most inclusive social systems into which humankind is organized are those diverse territorial/juridical/cultural entities we customarily and generically call societies, of which so-called nation states are the dominant modern forms, but which coexist with a few surviving "pre-modern" forms which we normally refere to as "cultures," e.g., the Navaho, the Eskimo, the Tiv, etc. The world's social structure thus appears to be a collection of separated and self-contained societies. Each has its own separate history and each its own unique ecology, culture, polity, and economy as the lines and different shadings in the diagram are attended to suggest. Note what we do not see. We see no social structures transcending societies nor any larger systems of which societies are a part. This means that when we search for the reasons societies differ one from another in their economics, politics, culture, etc., or for the reasons societies change through time we need look only to the interior of societies, i.e., to factors endogenous to each society.

Viewed from another angle the world's social structure looks like this.



We now see a two-dimensional edifice. Vertically, the world's social structure is a collection of societies organized around states that we normally call nations, countries or nation-states Horizontally, states are linked in a structure we variously call international society, the society of states, or the international system. Examining the picture more closely, we see two important additional things. First, national societies and international society are qualitatively different and distinct kinds of entities. For instance, politically national societies are organized as states; international society is stateless. Human relations in the two are governed by different cultural norms and different codes of morality and standards of justice. The world's elites, e.g., diplomats, heads of state, CEO's of large corporations, high ranking military officers, etc., live and work in international society while the world's masses live out their lives in national societies and have very little to do with the international society. Second, national and international societies are not only qualitatively distinct, they also are largely independent of each other as the dark horizontal line in the diagram is intended to suggest. National

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societies are largely self-contained with their internal or domestic politics, economics, and cultures little effected by the international system. Conversely, the international system is also largely self contained. We see a world that looks like this.

A social science grounded in a society-centric image of the world's social structure is not a social science conducive to the development of a global perspective on the part of either social scientists or the students we teach. Specifically, the perspective adversely effects our intellectual life in two significant ways and hence the quality of international education.

To begin with, because this perspective portrays societies to be the basic unit of social scientific analysis, and because we are ethnocentric and assume our own society to be at the center of the world's social structure we dichotomize the study of the world into the study of things American (American studies) and the study of things not-American (international studies). We then institutionalize this dichotomy in the social science curriculum. In American studies courses we often teach and learn about the United States as if there were no rest of the world.

This American/not-American division of labor in the intel-

lectual culture of higher education is a powerful impediment to the development of all dimensions of a global perspective. For example, to develop a perspective consciousness or a cross-cultural awareness a person must continuously place the American experience in a comparative frame and to ponder how this one act in the human drama is alike and different from acts played elsewhere in time and space. Also he or she must mingle with the audience who is watching the American players, and discover they often see the play very differently than we do. Social science courses that treat the United States as if American history, or American politics, or American culture were isolated from the larger human experience cannot provide this kind of education.

Or take the development of a knowledge of global dynamics. Can we expect to foster this intellectual competence when we teach about the United States as if there were no transnational structures and social processes linking the U.S. to the rest of the world? We are dismayed when we see: a future high school American history teacher who has studied about the American revolution in an American history class and about 18th Century British/French rivalry in a European history course, but who cannot relate the two phenomena; or a future high school economics teacher who studies about 19th Century European economic history in one semester and 19th Century American agrarian history in another, but who sees absolutely no relationship between the commercialization of American agriculture and the proletaritization and urbanization of European workers; or a future world history teacher who has studied about the rise of slavery in the Americas and about the development of capitalism

in Europe but who cannot connect the two. No social scientist should be dismayed or surprised by these students' lack of a an awareness of global dynamics. They are our children, and it is our curriculum that teaches them to be blind to the interdependencies characterizing the world's social structure.

Not only does the currently prevailing intellectual architecture of social science education separate American studies from international studies, it balkanizes the latter into three largely discrete and autonomous domains of intellectual inquiry: 1) foreign area studies (e.g., African studies, Latin American studies, Soviet studies, etc.), 2) comparative studies (e.g., the study of comparative politics, comparative economics, comparative history, etc.), and 3) international relations studies (e.g., the study of international politics, international economics, international organizations, etc.).

Once the study of the world's social structure is divided up in this way, we then proceed to teach undergraduates about Africa as if there were no Asia, or about Asia as if there were no Europe, or about differences between developed and underdeveloped countries as if there were no global economy, or about comparative domestic politics as if states were not embedded in an interstate system, or about international politics as if there were no domestic politics. The consequences are predictable: classrooms filled with undergraduates who have taken an African studies course but who cannot see links between prices in world commodity markets and the quality of life in African villages; undergraduates who have studied about urbanization in Latin America but who see no differences between this and urbaniz-

ation in North America and Europe, let alone see how the operation of the international political economy helped to produce these regional differences; students who read about austerity policies in contemporary Poland but who cannot relate these to the political economy of international debt. I'll stop. Each of us can multiply examples illustrating the intellectual deprivations created by a curriculum that separates and mutually isolates area studies, comparative studies, and international relation studies.

The Future

If, as I have argued, deeply ingrained features of traditional social science create major barriers to good international education is there any cause for optimism about the future? Yes, there is. The source of hope lies in several intellectual developments currently underway that are giving rise to a social science much more congenial to international education. There is a reappearance of political economy as a serious scholarly enterprise which does much to overcome disciplinary fragmentation. A growing number of social scientists are rediscovering the importance of history. Positivism is under severe philosophical challenge, and many scholars are engaged in the construction of explicitly value-oriented social science. These developments bode well for the future. This is particularly true since each is aligned with what may well be the single most profound change underway in the intellectual architecture of contemporary social science. This is the growing criticism of the traditional society-centric image of the world's social structure and the

accompanying emergence of a new, alternative perspective. An increasing number and an expanding variety of scholars are now arguing that the social structure of the world historically nor contemporaneously cannot be adequately comprehended either as a collection of separated, unique, and autonomously developing societies or as split-level edifice comprised of national societies on the one hand and an international society on the other.

In the place of the society-centric image, a world system perspective is emerging. This new perspective is currently articulated in diverse ways in different bodies of social science scholarship so it is difficult to summarize it briefly. I hope the following crystalization of the perspective's basic elements does not grossly oversimplify complexity.

> The social structure of the world has become progressively more globalized over the past ten thousand years or so, and this process has very rapidly accelerated in the past half millenia.
>
> A world system originated in the early modern era. This system has expanded geographically to encompass the whole globe, and it has expanded in social space to encompass more and more of humankind's social and ecological life.
>
> The modern world system is a historically concrete social system with a "life of its own," which is to say it has systemic properties such as historically constant structures, cyclical dynamics, and developmental trends that characterize the system as a whole, not simply its parts.
>
> All of the social units and formations into which humankind is organized such as states,, classes, firms, households, nationalities/ethnic groups, regions, settlements (villages, towns, cities), etc., are parts of the world system. This is to say, they are embedded in and hence shaped and molded in part by their respective structural positions in the world system and by the system's systemic properties.

A social science built on the world system perspective is very different from a social science built on the society-centric perspective. It is too early to say what a social science of the world system will look like in detail, but two general features of its intellectual architecture are very visible. One, it is a social science that focuses on the world system as a whole. To put the matter in the technical jargon of the day, it is a social science that no longer treats societies as the basic unit of social analysis but rather sees the world system as a totality to be the basic unit of analysis. Thus, it is a social science squarely targeted on the intellectual tasks of comprehending the origin of the modern world system, of mapping its historical development and possible future, and of understanding the system's historically constant structures, its cyclical dynamics, and its developmental trends and the intereactions among these.

Two, a social science of the world system is a social science that examines countries, regions, social institutions, etc., for what they in fact are; namely, parts of a larger whole, component elements in the world system. For example, it is a social science in which an historian of American society is very sensitive to linkages between social change in the United States and historical change in the world system; in which a sociologist of the family is alert to the impact of world system phenomena on the structure of households; in which an anthropologist studying an African village seeks to map its links to the world system; in which a political scientist studying revolution in the

Third World is self-conscious of the world/historical context in which these revolutions take place.

As a social science of the world system grows and develops so will a social science education about the world system. I have no doubt when my grandchildren or great-grandchildren open their college catalogues some twenty-five to fifty years down the road they will see a section of the undergraduate bulletin that will look something like the following.

World System Studies

This cluster of courses consists of introductory and advanced classes focused on the study of the modern world system. After successfully completing the two introductory courses undergraduates may select among several more advanced classes.

Introduction to the Study of the World System
- An Overview of the World System
- The Historical Development of the World System

The World System in Historical Perspective
- The Origin and Early Development of the World System: 1450-1760.
- The World System: 1760-1900
- The World System in the Twentieth Century
- The Future of the World System
- The Modern World System in Comparative Historical Perspective

The World System in Regional and Cultural Perspective
- Europe in the World System
- Africa in the World System
- South and South East Asia in the World System
- East Asia in the World System
- Latin America in the World System
- The Atlantic Community in the World System
- Islam in the World System
- Christianity in the World System
- The Pacific Basin in the World System
- The United States in the World System

The World System in Sociological Perspective
- World System Structure, Dynamics and Trends
- States in the World System

Business Firms in World System
Families and Households in the World System
Nationalities/Ethnic Groups in the World System
The Class Structure of the World System
Gender Relations and the World System
Race Relations and the World System
War and the World System

The World System in Social Action Perspective
Controlling War and Working for Peace
Promoting Social Justice in the World System
Restoring and Maintaining Ecological Health in the World System
Promoting Human Rights in the World System

When this day comes then all students, including prospective teachers, will have a much better chance of getting a good international education. It will not be Utopia, but at least the intellectual structure of social science education will facilitate, rather than impede, the development of a global perspective.

The Here and Now

I am hopeful about the long run, but as Lord Keyne's homily says, in the long run we are all dead. What about 1986, 1987, 1990? What can be done in the here and now to enhance the contribution of social science instruction to the international education of prospective teachers?

At least two things. First, let's go back to the exceptions to the bleak generalization with which I began this paper. There are a number, indeed a growing number, of globally oriented undergraduate social science courses. For example, genuine world history courses are emerging. New globally oriented world geography courses are being developed. Courses focused on global problems are proliferating. The task is to find ways of expand-

ing the number of prospective teachers who enroll in these types of courses and to carefully evaluate what courses have what kind of impact in the development of a global perspective. Could the AACTE do three things? First, in cooperation with such groups as the World Policy Institute, the World History Association, the American Association of Geographers, the Political Economy of the World System Section of the American Sociological Association, etc., identify the "globally oriented" courses currently being offered in the twenty or so largest teacher training institutions Second, work with officials in colleges of education to find ways of channeling more prospective teachers into these courses? Third, arrange for systemic evaluation of the impact of different courses.

Second, let's consider the matter of developing new types of courses that might be required of prospective teachers. The requisite scholarship exists for developing at least four kinds of courses that might prove particularly effective in developing a global perspective on the part of prospective teachers (and other undergraduates who take them). Again, because of space restrictions I will dwell on one of these more than the other.

One type are world history courses explicitly focused on developing students' understanding of how and why the world's social structure has become progressively more globalized throughout human history and especially so in the modern era (post 1500 A.D.). To illustrate what I have in mind, let me indicate one (but only one of many) possible ways such a course could be intellectually structured.

The social structure of the World has become progressively more globalized through human history. In the pre-modern era this trend is evidenced in a variety of ways including the development of large scale empires, the development of long distant trade networks and the development of large scale arenas of cultural diffusion.

This long term trend has rapidly accelerated in the modern era as a result of European expansion, the rise and expansion of capitalism, and the development of modern science and technology. The first, second, third, . . . and nth order consequence of these developments have been to substantially globalize all facets of the world's social structure.

--Geographically, global systems of communication and transport have developed through which flow an ever-expanding traffic of people, goods, services, ideas, diseases, etc.

--Economically, the world's once isolated local and regional economies have been progressively incorporated into a global economy.

--Politically, the world-wide diffusion of the modern European states system has created a world polity in which a growing number of groups and individuals participate.

--Sociologically, most social activities (sports, science, crime, education, music, etc.) have become transnational in scope and the number of large scale organizations operating on a transnational scale has proliferated.

--Demographically, massive migrations have desegregated the planet racially, ethnically, linguistically, and religiously creating multicultural/multiethnic societies in many parts of the world.

--Culturally, a westernized, science and technology oriented global culture has developed in a set of uneasy relationships to the world's traditional local, ethnic, and regional culture.

--Ecologically, massive migrations of plants, animals, and micro-organisms have substantially homogenized the biotic environment, and a growing fraction of humankind have come to depend upon and to impact on the global physical environment.

--Psychologically, a global consciousness has been slowly developing manifest in a growing sense of the unicity

of the planet's ecosystem, in the unicity of the human species, and in the unicity of the sociosphere.

A second type of course are courses focused on the geography of the modern world system. Again there are many possibilities, but clearly one such possibility are courses centered on the study of the major global systems interconnecting the world, e.g., global transport and communication systems; the world agricultural system; the global energy systems; world industries such as the automobile, steel, commuter, textile and pharmaceutical industries, etc.; the global system of science; the world polity; weapons systems and arms transfers; etc.

A third type are courses in the sociology or political economy of the modern world system. Here I have in mind courses organized around:

> The study of historically constant features of the world system such as the states system, the commodity mode of production, and core/periphery division of labor.
>
> The study of the world system's cyclical dynamics such as long waves of expansion and construction in the global economy and the rise and fall of hegemonic states.
>
> The study of long term developmental trends in the world system such as the progressive commodification of social life, the proletarization of labor, urbanization, capital concentration and centralization, the expansion of state power, the mechanization of production, etc.
>
> The study of major social institutions within a world system context, e.g., states, classes, firms, households, nationalities/ethnic groups, etc.

A fourth type are courses focused in the study of American history and society in world system context.

A fifth type are courses tailored to particular city in which universities are located. These are courses in which students engage in field research of the linkages between that particular community and the world system.

Could the AACTE do three things: one, in collaboration with professional social science organizations identify social scientists in several universities who would agree to develop these types of courses; two, work with colleges of education in these universities to make one or more of these courses required of all prospective teachers; and three, arrange to systematically evaluate the impact of the courses on the international education of prospective teachers.

Notes

1. A Global Perspective for Teacher Education, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1983.

2. Ibid.

3. To my knowledge, the closest we come to adequate documentation is found in the study of the international dimension of undergraduate education conducted by the Council on Learning in the early 1980's. For a good analysis of the implications of this study for teacher education see Judith Torney-Purta, "The Global Awareness Survey: Implications for Teacher Education," Theory into Practice, XXI, No. 3, Summer 1982, pp. 200-205.

4. For example, Dr. Torney-Purta's research suggests that "requirements regarding courses in history and geography may be one way to increase the level of global awareness [of prospective teachers]. Ibid, p. 204.

5. Some support for this blunt assertion is found in T. Barrows, et al., College Student's Knowledge and Beliefs: A Survey of Global Understanding, New Rochelle, N.Y.: Change Magazine Press, 1981, and in Torney-Purta, op. cit.